
SERMON NOTES July 5, 2020

Today's notes also available at CCPL.life/Connect

James 4:1-3
The Heart of a Fighter
Pastor Mike

I. The _____ and _____ of our conflict

a. Conflict is rooted in _____ rather than _____

b. Conflict isn't just _____, but it's _____

c. The problem isn't _____, but it's _____

II. The _____ of conflict

III. The _____ to conflict; Brining our _____

a. God calls us to _____, not _____

It's wrong to let our _____ be the excuse for someone else's _____

b. Bringing our desires to God _____

i. God calls us to surrender _____

ii. Understanding the _____ of prayer

iii. God calls us to surrender _____

Do we pray to change _____ or to allow him to change _____

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. When we have differences with people in the church, we use nice Christian words like “difference of opinion” and “disagreements,” but James describes these differences with harsh and violent words like “quarrels and fights,” and “murder.”
 - a. Why did James use such harsh – even violent words? Why do you think there is such a vast disparity between James’ description of our interpersonal differences and the way that we commonly describe them?
 - b. Look at Matthew 5:21-22. How does Jesus’ teaching on anger relate to James’ words here? How is anger like murder?
 - c. Continue in Matthew 5, and read verses 21 through 26. Can you think of a brother or sister in the church that has something against you? What is Jesus calling you to do? Are you willing to do it?

2. James is very direct in his teaching that our differences with other people come from the desires that wage war within us. In verse 2 he says, “*You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*”
 - a. Do you agree that this is a universal rule; all our fights and quarrels come from the desires within us? Are there any exceptions? Explain your answer.
 - b. Think of an argument that you had in the past; Can you now look back in retrospect and see the desires that drove it? What can you learn from what you now see?
 - c. Can you think of a person with whom you struggle with now? What desires are at the core of that relational problem?

3. James 4:1-3 teaches that the source of our quarrels and fights is our passions or desires that are at war within us. However, he doesn’t say that these are evil desires or passions. Can a good and/or healthy desire become the source of an unhealthy conflict? If so, how does this happen, and what can we do to try and prevent this from happening?

4. In speaking about our desires and passions, James 4:2 teaches, “*you do not have because you do not ask.*”
 - a. In your opinion and experience, how common is it that you have passionate desire for things that you don’t bring to God in prayer? Why don’t we bring these desires to God?
 - b. What is the connection between our not asking God for these desires, and these desires being the source of conflict with other people?

5. Seldom if ever does someone pray to God about something that they believe at the time is based on wrong motives, yet James tells us that a common problem is that we pray with wrong motives. How can we evaluate the motives of our prayers?

6. Have you traditionally seen prayer as primarily a way to influence God toward our requests (or desires) or as a means by which God changes us and our desires? Will our prayers be different if we see prayer as a means by which God changes us rather than a means by which we change God? How?